

August 25, 2023

A one-size-fits-all approach to binding arbitration will not serve students and local communities, say AEFO, ETFO, and OEFTA

TORONTO, ON – The Association des enseignantes et des enseignants franco-ontariens (AEFO), Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario (ETFO), and Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association (OEFTA) issued the following statement today, in response to the announcement that the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation (OSSTF/FEESO) may be entering into binding arbitration with the Government of Ontario:

“Today’s announcement from Minister of Education Stephen Lecce and OSSTF/FEESO, that the parties may be entering into binding arbitration, is not something that AEFO, ETFO, and OEFTA can consider at our respective bargaining tables at this time.

Entering into binding arbitration at this juncture would not support the students we serve in elementary and secondary schools – as binding arbitration would all but guarantee that the key issues we have brought forward at our respective bargaining tables, which are critical to learning and working conditions in our schools, would not be addressed.

Furthermore, the decision to enter into binding arbitration now impacts the opportunity for meaningful local bargaining on key local issues.

The Ford Conservative government has continually refused to engage in substantive discussions with our unions, despite our many attempts to make progress at our respective bargaining tables. We once again call on the government to respect our right to free and fair collective bargaining, and come to our bargaining tables prepared to engage in meaningful discussions about critical issues facing publicly funded education in Ontario – issues such as increased violence in schools, resources and supports for student mental health, teachers’ use of professional judgement, and addressing the teacher shortage.

The frontline teachers and education workers represented by AEFO, ETFO, and OEFTA will continue to work toward achieving fair, negotiated agreements that defend and protect publicly funded education, and support all students, educators, and families in this province.”

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For more information, please contact any of the following media relations representatives:

AEFO— Mélanie Routhier Boudreau at 613-244-2336 or mrboudreau@aefo.on.ca

ETFO—Carla Pereira at 416-576-9074 or cpereira@etfo.org

OEFTA—Michelle Despault at 416-925-2493, ext. 509 or m.despault@catholicteachers.ca